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LS 13343.6.5

SIGILLVM ACADEMIÆ HARVARDIANÆ IN NOV ANG
CHRISTO ET ECCLESIÆ
LS 13343.6.5
Presented
by
Nath. B. Shurtleff
24 Feb. 1851.

THUNDER & LIGHTNING;

AND

DEATHS AT MARSHFIELD

IN

1658 & 1666.

BY

NATHANIEL BRADSTREET SHURTLEFF.

BOSTON:
PRIVATELY PRINTED.
M DCCC L.

3343.6.5

1851 Feb 24
Life of the Author
of Boston

100 COPIES FOR PRIVATE USE.

THIS

MEMORIAL

OF

TWO EVENTS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF OUR COUNTRY

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO

THE MEMBERS OF

THE

American Antiquarian,

AND

Massachusetts Historical Societies,

BY AN

ASSOCIATE.

"Veterum non immemor parentum."

PREFACE.

THE principal object in preparing and printing this tract is to preserve, and keep together, certain facts relating to deaths in the town of Marshfield, which were caused by lightning nearly two centuries ago.

William Shurtleff, who was killed in 1666, was the ancestor of all who bear the name in New England, and perhaps of all others of the name in this country:—And, if his name occurs here more frequently than that of others, the reason is obvious, that the

writer wishes to preserve all that relates to his own ancestor, of whom he should be supposed to know more, and in whom he ought to feel a greater interest. Moreover, it is to be remembered that this is strictly a private tract, for private use only, and consequently, differs in many respects with published narratives, which are always public property, and amenable to the severest criticism according to the common usage. The accounts of the death of Mr. Shurtleff vary much; that in the letter of Mr. Arnold is more in accordance with the family belief, and is sustained by corroboratory evidence.

The letter and its accompanying manuscript, given in these pages, are among the "Mather Papers," once belonging to Rev. Thomas Prince, the annalist, now preserved in the archives of the Massachusetts Histor-

ical Society, and are now printed entire for the first time.

An examination of Winsor's History of Duxbury first drew attention to the real value of these original documents, the present importance of which had escaped notice, they having been reserved for a particular examination at a more convenient and less occupied time.

It was not the primary intention of the writer to extend his tract to so many pages, few though they are; but a brief account of the town where the calamities happened, and short notices of the parties concerned, seemed necessary and unavoidable.

N. B. S.

2 Beacon Street,
October, 1850.

writer wishes to preserve all that relates to his own ancestor, of whom he should be supposed to know more, and in whom he ought to feel a greater interest. Moreover, it is to be remembered that this is strictly a private tract, for private use only, and consequently, differs in many respects with published narratives, which are always public property, and amenable to the severest criticism according to the common usage. The accounts of the death of Mr. Shurtleff vary much; that in the letter of Mr. Arnold is more in accordance with the family belief, and is sustained by corroboratory evidence.

The letter and its accompanying manuscript, given in these pages, are among the "Mather Papers," once bel to Rev Thomas Prin reserv in t s His

Thunder and Lightning;

AND

SUDDEN DEATHS AT MARSHFIELD IN 1658 AND 1666.

In the early days of New England, the town of Marshfield, in the Colony of New Plymouth, suffered very much from the effects of lightning. An account of two strokes, of particular severity, is contained in a letter to Rev. Increase Mather, pastor of the Second Church in Boston, from Rev. Samuel Arnold, pastor of the Church in Marshfield, and in an accompanying manuscript written by Capt. Nathaniel Thomas, also of Marshfield. Both are very graphically related from the testimony of eye-witnesses to the terrible events.

The first of these occurred on the thirty first day of July, in the year 1658; when John, a son of Mr. John Phillips, while in company with

away colony, and divers burnt with lightning, a great whirlwind at the same time." In the diary of John Hull, the famous mint-master of the Massachusetts Colony, the fact is recorded without any mention of the name of town or persons, or the exact day of its occurrence. Rev. William Hubbard, in his history, erroneously uses the name of John for William, in stating that "in the year 1666, three were in like manner suddenly killed in a storm of thunder, whereof one was named John Shurtleff, that had a child in his hand, and was holding his wife in the other, both of whom escaped, when himself was struck dead."

These occurrences are so accurately described and well related in the letter and manuscript already alluded to, that they are given here in the exact words of the writers, the peculiarities of the spelling, punctuation and style being followed with great care. The same are repeated, in order to have them appear in a more modern form; and, therefore, in one more easily and intelligibly read, and more conformable with the present style.

Letter from Rev. Samuel Arnold, Senior, to Rev. Increase Mather.

Reverend Sir I salute you in the Lord & have according to your desire indeavoured to giue you the best informatjon I could obtaine respecting the 2 terrible stroakes by thunder & lightning that were in our toune by enquiry of such as were eye witnesses of those awfull dispensatjons being as brands pluckt out of the burning./ as for the first in July last day 1658. I refer you to the enclosed paper which I obtained from Capt: Nath: Thomas written with his oun hand

As for the second being on June 23. 1666. we being sorely distressed with drought had on the 4th day of the week made our address to the most high God by humble fasting & prayer, the drought continued till the last day of the sayd

weeke on which day it pleased God to answer us by terrible things in righteousnes who was yet the God of our salvatjon, for about the middle of the sayd day there arose in the north the most dismall black cloud I thinke that ever I saw our eyes were fixed upon it so pinching was the drought we feared least it should go beside us & so terrible was the aspect of it that we trembled least it should come ouer us, but God that steers the course of the clouds so disposed that it came directly ouer our toune & it was extreamly darke & thundred & lightnd dreadfully, & ther being in the hous of John Phillips (father to the foresayd John Phillips slaine by the former stroake) the number of 14 ꝑsons the woman of the hous calling earnestly to shut the dore which was done, instantly a terrible clap of thunder fell upon the hous & rent the chimney & split the doore in many places & struck most of the ꝑsons if not all.

Timothy Rogers my informer told me that when he came to himselfe he saw the house full of smoake & there was a terrible smell of brimstone & that fire lay scattered all about the floore whether the fire that was upon the hearth by the vjolence of the

stroake hurled about the hous or fire from heaven he kn not, he thought at first that all the people had been dead but himselfe till it pleased God to reviue the most of them, but 3 of them were mortally struck with Gods arrowes that they never breathed more (viz) the wife of John Phillips & a son of his about 20 yeers of age or upwards and one Willj: Shertly who having been a little before burnt out of his oun hous & was with his family a present sojourner there, who had (as is sayd) a little child in his armes which was wonderfully preserued, there was also a dog slaine under a table behinde 2 little children sitting as is sayd upon the table ledge the wife of the sayd Shertly being big with childe neer her full time was gracjously reviued & notwithstanding both stroak & fright seasonably & mercifully deliuered we may say as Elihu Job 36. 31 by them he judges the people & giues meat in abundance the Lord guide that we may sing of mercy & judgment & walk uisely in a ꝑfect way untill he come unto us, & the Lord guide your son & croune your pjous indeavours both by tongue & you with a blessing to the promoting of his oun glory the good of the pres-

ent & after generatjons which shall be the prayer of him who desires an interest in your prayers & am

Yours in what I may serve you
Sam: Arnold Senj:

Marshfeild July 28. 1683.

Sir I thanke you for your booke, & present my salutatjons to Mrs Mather, & your good son Cotton, whome I pray God to bless & make a blessing. it was almost a month after the date of your first letter ere I receiued it.

To the Reverend Mr Increas .
Mather Teacher to the
Church in the North
end of Boston thes
present

The foregoing Letter modernized.

REVEREND SIR,

I salute you in the Lord; and have, according to your desire, endeavored to give you the best information I could obtain respecting the two terrible strokes by thunder and lightning that were in our town, by inquiry of such as were eye-witnesses of those awful dispensations, being as brands plucked out of the burning. As for the first, in July, last day, 1658, I refer you to the inclosed paper, which I obtained from Captain Nathaniel Thomas, written with his own hand.

As for the second, being on June 23, 1666, we being sorely distressed with drought, had on the fourth day of the week made our address to the most high God by humble fasting and prayer. The drought continued till the last day of the said

week, on which day it pleased God to answer us by terrible things in righteousness; who was yet the God of our salvation, for about the middle of the said day there arose in the north the most dismal black cloud, I think, that ever I saw. Our eyes were fixed upon it; so pinching was the drought we feared lest it should go beside us, and so terrible was the aspect of it, that we trembled lest it should come over us. But God, that steers the course of the clouds, so disposed that it came directly over our town; and it was extremely dark, and thundered and lightened dreadfully, and there being in the house of John Phillips (father to the aforesaid John Phillips slain by the former stroke,) the number of fourteen persons, the woman of the house calling earnestly to shut the door, which was done, instantly a terrible clap of thunder fell upon the house, and rent the chimney and split the door in many places, and struck most of the persons, if not all.

Timothy Rogers, my informer, told me, that when he came to himself, he saw the house full of smoke, and there was a terrible smell of brimstone, and that fire laid scattered all about the floor; whether the

fire that was upon the hearth, by the violence of the stroke, hurled about the house, or fire from heaven, he knew not. He thought, at first, that all the people had been dead but himself, till it pleased God to revive the most of them. But three of them were mortally struck with God's arrows, that they never breathed more, viz:—the wife of John Phillips, and a son of his, about twenty years of age or upwards, and one William Shurtleff, who having been a little before burnt out of his own house, and was, with his family, a present sojourner there, who had, as is said, a little child in his arms, which was wonderfully preserved. There was also a dog slain under a table, behind two little children, sitting, as is said, upon the table ledge. The wife of the said Shurtleff, being big with child, near her full time, was graciously revived; and, notwithstanding both stroke and fright, seasonably and mercifully delivered. We may say as Elihu, Job, xxxvi. 31., "by them judgeth he the people; he giveth them meat in abundance." The Lord guide, that we may sing of mercy and judgment, and walk wisely in a perfect way, until he come unto us; and the Lord guide your son, and crown your pious endeavors both by tongue,

and you with a blessing, to the promoting of his own glory, the good of the present and after generations, which shall be the prayer of him who desires an interest in your prayers, and am

Yours in what I may serve you.

SAMUEL ARNOLD, Sen.

Marshfield, July 28, 1683.

Sir, I thank you for your book, and present my salutations to Mrs. Mather, and your good son Cotton, whom I pray God to bless and make a blessing. It was almost a month after the date of your first letter ere I received it.

To the Reverend MR. INCREASE MATHER,
Teacher to the Church in the
North end of Boston,
these present.

Manuscript of Captain Nathaniel Thomas, in Rev. S. Arnold's Letter.

In the month of August in the yeare 1658 there was in the Towne of Marshfeild a terrible storm of Thunder Lightening & raine, & as I was goeing homeward being about a mile from home I meet with one John Phillips & another man coming out of a meadow from makeing hay to the next house for shelter from the storm, who aduised me to goe in with them to the house least I should be ouertaken in the storm ere I should get home the storm then coming vp exseeding black & Terrible I accordingly went in with them. & the s^{d} Phillips sat downe on a stoole with his face toward the Iñer door & his back to the hearth & his side closs to the Jam̃ of the chimney I sat downe with my

face directly toward him about six foot from him, the Thunder came quickly vp ouer the house The Clouds flying exseeding Low & thick soe that the heauens were much darkened Then in a moment came downe (as it were) a great ball of fire with a Terrible crack of Thunder & fell Just before where the s[d] Phillips sat, my eye then hapening to be on him saw him once start on the stole he sat on & fell from thence dead on the hearth backward without any motion of life, many bricks of the chiney were beaten downe the principle Rafters split the battens & lineing next the chiney in the chamber broken, one of the maine posts of the house into which the sumer was framed torn in to shiuers & great part of it caried seuerall rod from the house, the dore where the ball of fire came downe Just before the s[d] Phillips was broken downe, out of the gert or sumer afores[d] being a dry oake was peices wonderfully taken, I doe not remember there was any outward appearance of hurt vpon the body of the s[d] Phillips, a young child being at that moment about three foot from s[d] Phillips had noe harm

The foregoing Manuscript modernized.

In the month of August, in the year 1658, there was, in the Town of Marshfield, a terrible storm of thunder, lightning and rain; and as I was going homeward, being about a mile from home, I met with one John Phillips, and another man, coming out of a meadow, from making hay, to the next house for shelter from the storm, who advised me to go in with them to the house, lest I should be overtaken in the storm before I could get home. The storm then coming up exceedingly black and terrible, I accordingly went in with them. The said Phillips sat down upon a stool, with his face towards the inner door, his back to the hearth, and his side close to the jam of the chimney. I sat down with my face directly towards him, about six feet from him.

The thunder came quickly up over the house, the clouds flying exceedingly low and thick, so that the heavens were much darkened. Then in a moment came down, as it were, a great ball of fire with a terrible crack of thunder, and fell just before where the said Phillips sat. My eye then happening to be on him, I saw him at once start from the stool he sat upon, and fall thence backward upon the hearth dead, without any motion of life. Many bricks of the chimney were beaten down, the principal rafters split, the battens and lining next the chimney in the chamber broken, and one of the main posts of the house, into which the summer was framed, torn into shivers and great part of it carried several rods from the house. The door, where the ball of fire came down just before the said Phillips, was broken down. Pieces were wonderfully taken out of the girt, or aforesaid summer, being of dry oak. I do not remember that there was any outward appearance of hurt upon the body of the said Phillips. A young child, being at that moment about three feet from said Phillips, had no harm.

Inquest on the body of John Phillips, taken from the Records of Plymouth Colony.

"Att the Court of Assistants held att Plymouth the fourth of August 1658 befor Willam Collyare Capt Josias Winslow Leiftenant Thomas Southworth and Ensigne Willam Bradford Assistants &c.

Mr Josias Winslow Senr	Timothy Williamson
Mr John Bradford	Abraham Jackson
Mr Samuell Arnold	Samuell Baker
Thomas Doghead	Anthony Snow
John Russell	Josepth Rose
John Adams	John Caruer

Being Impannelled and sworne to site vpon the Corpes of John Phillipes Junr, whoe very suddenly expired on Satterday the last of July 1658.

Wee find That this p'sent day John Phillips Junr came into his dwelling lately knowne or called Mr Buckleyes house in good health as Goodwife Williamson afeirmeth and satt vpon a stoole by the Chimney and by an Imediate hand of God manifested in Thunder and lightening the said John Phillipes came by his death."—*Court Orders*, Vol. III. p. 141.

From T. Alden's Account of the Religious Societies in Portsmouth, N. H.

"He" [William Shurtleff] "lived in Marshfield and was killed with lightning, in 1666. The tradition is that he was endeavouring to comfort his wife, who was much terrified at the severity of the tempest, and had just taken an infant from her arms and was seated, having one child between his knees and the other two in his lap; yet the flash of lightning, which killed him, did neither of them nor his wife any injury."—*Mass. Hist. Collections*, Vol. X. p. 70.

Extracts from Morton's New-England's Memorial.

1658. "This year, on the last day of *July*, it pleased God that by Thunder and Lightning one *John Philips* of *Marshfield*, in the Jurisdiction of *New-Plimouth*, was suddenly slain."—p. 155.

1666. "This year it pleased God to go on in a manifestation of his displeasure against *New-England*, in a very remarkable manner, by striking dead in a moment, by a blow of Thunder, three persons in the Town of *Marshfield* in the Jurisdiction of *New-Plimouth*, in the moneth of *June*, *viz.* one named *William Shirtliff*, and a Woman and a Youth; which sad Dispensation of Gods hand, being considered with some Circumstances, gave cause to the beholders to be much astonished: the said *Shirtliff* having his Wife by the hand, and

sitting by her to chear her, in respect that the said storm was so fierce, he was slain, and she preserved, though in some measure scorched with the Lightning; yea, he had one of his Children in his arms, and himself slain, and the Childe preserved. We have likewise received intelligence of four more that about that time were slain by Thunder and Lightning about *Pascataqua*, and divers more hurt. At the time of this storm of Thunder and Lightning, in the which those of *Marshfield* died, there arose likewise a very great Whirlwind, that where it came it tore up Trees by the Roots, though through mercy it did little other hurt.

It was a great while, and many years spent since the *English* came into these parts, before any very considerable hurt was done by Thunder and Lightning to either man, or beast appertaining to them, although sometimes very fierce storms of that kinde, as frequently as in these times: but now how doth the Lord go on gradually in this, as in other Judgements here in *New-England?* first, by striking Cattel, and then one person at a time, and this year divers, to the number of seven, besides some Cattel also.

Thus *God thundereth marvellously with his voice, he worketh great things which we know not:* He *can send the Lightnings that they may walk, and say, Lo here we are. Hath any an arm like God? or can any thunder with a voice like him?* By his terrible Voice *he breaketh the Cedars, and divideth the flames of fire;* which he commissionates to do his pleasure, sometimes not onely striking Cedars, but great Oaks in a wonderful manner, sometimes Beasts, sometimes Men and Women. If *Gods Judgements have* thus *been abroad in the Earth, how ought the Inhabitants* (of *New-England*) *to learn righteousness?* How easily can the Lord *stain the pride of our glory* with a stroke of his hand? Let not the familiarness or frequency of such Providences, cause them to be neglected by us, to improve them as God would have us, *to fear before him*, and to turn from such iniquities especially as are most displeasing unto him, and to hold our lives in our hands, and to be in a readiness for his pleasure, lest *knowing not our time, as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare*, so we shall be snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon us.

Job 37. 5. & 38. 35. & 40. 8.

Psal. 29. 5, 7.

Isaiah 26. 9.

Eccles. 8. 13.

Eccles. 9. 12.

This year the Lord threatned the Country with that infectious and contagious Disease of the *Small Pox*, which began at *Boston*, whereof some few died: but through his great mercy it is stayed, and none of late have died thereof.

This year the Lord likewise threatned, and in some measure executed his displeasure upon the Country by Drought; but through his mercy hath of late sent plenty of Rain, for the recovering of the fruits of the earth. Although it is to be observed, That soon after a day of Humiliation was observed by some Congregations, for the blessing of Rain in the Drought above-mentioned, that sad stroke by the Thunder and Lightning at *Marshfield* fell out: so that we may say with the Psalmist unto the Lord, *By terrible things in Righteousness thou hast answered us, O God of our Salvation.*"—pp. 178—180.

The Town of Marshfield.

During the first few years of the settlement of the Plymouth Colony it was the policy of our fathers to concentrate all matters of government, whether parochial, municipal, or colonial, in the place where they first settled, and therefore Plymouth was the only incorporated town in the Colony. Consequently, although many of the most important men dwelt at a considerable distance from this settlement, they were all obliged to perform political duties and attend religious services in this town, to their no small hinderance and trouble.

About the year 1632, the inconvenience of going to Plymouth for everything being so great, a few precincts were formed, which were subsequently incorporated into towns. To prevent as

much as possible a removal of the better sort of persons from Plymouth, it was thought advisable to apportion some of the land which was a little remote to such special persons as would promise not to remove, but who would cultivate by servants in their employ such land as farms. Allotments were therefore made of land at a place called Green's Harbor, where no grants had ever been made. This constituted the beginning of the town of Marshfield; which, although it contained a very fair proportion of the intelligent members of the colony, was not incorporated until sometime afterwards. It was known to the aborigines as Missaucatucket, and was first called by the Plymouth people Rexame. On March 2nd 1640-1 Josias Winslow was "sworne to execute the office of Constable there" [Rexame] "untill June come twelue months." The name Marshfield first appears in the Records, on the 1st of March, 1641-2. It was first represented in the colonial government in the year 1642 by Thomas Bourne and Kenelm Winslow as Deputies, Edward Winslow and William Thomas, inhabitants of the same town, being at the same time Assistants.

Our excellent fathers watched diligently over the religious interests of new towns, and took special care that a good ministry should be sustained, and that those who had the charge of dispensing the divine word should be particularly provided for in the bestowment of land. In furtherance of this, and for the benefit of the future minister of the territorial district which afterwards was incorporated as Marshfield, the following Court Order was passed on the 3d of March, 1639-40, at a time when there was a controversy between this precinct and the town of Duxbury, concerning their boundary line:—

"Whereas there is a controversy betwixt Greens harbour & Duxborrow about the lands betweene the fresh of Greens Harbour riuer and the South Riuer It is ordered and graunted by the Court of freemen to Mr Edward Winslowe & the rest of the Neighbourhood of Greens Harbour a competent ꝑcon of vplands and meddowe betwixt the said Riuers for a farme for a minister and one other competent porcon of land nere vnto the said lot for the minister either for Nehemiah Smyth or some other as the said Inhabitants of Greens harbour shall place in."

In regard to religious instruction, the people of Marshfield were singularly fortunate in possessing for their early teachers, men of excellence, learning and ability. To one of these we are indebted for the preservation of the particulars of the melancholy events, which it is the object of these few pages to commemorate.

The first pastor of the Church at Marshfield was Rev. Richard Blinman, a Welchman, who came to New England through the influence of Governor Winslow. He was admitted to the freedom of the Massachusetts Colony on the 7th of October, 1641, having been previously propounded at Plymouth on the 2nd of March, 1640-1, and soon after removed to Marshfield, where he remained only a very short time. He afterwards was at Gloucester, New London and New Haven, and finally returned to England, and preached in Bristol, where he died at an advanced age. That he was ever settled over the Church, so as to entitle him to be considered its pastor, is doubtful; but the offices which he performed may, through courtesy and with propriety, give him the title, which he perhaps did not have by

a regular settlement, according to the custom and manner of the time, over the Marshfield Church.

Rev. Edward Bulkeley, the oldest son of Rev. Peter Bulkeley of Concord, was the second pastor of the Church of Marshfield. He was settled about the year 1642, and left, in 1658, for Concord, where he was afterwards settled, as the successor to his father, in 1660. He was admitted to the fellowship of the First Church in Boston on the 22d of March, 1634-5, as a "singleman"; and was dismissed from the same Church on the 15th of August, 1641, in the following words:— "Our brother Mr Edward Buckley was by ye Churches silence consented to be dismissed to ye Church at Concord vpon his & their desire." He was admitted to the freedom of the Plymouth Colony on the 5th of June, 1644. He died, in a good old age, on the 2nd of January, 1695-6, at Chelmsford, and was interred at Concord.

Rev. Samuel Arnold, the third pastor and the author of the letter printed on pages 9—16, was settled over the church in 1658. He was admitted to be a freeman of the Colony of New Plymouth on the 7th of June, 1653, having been propounded

for freedom on the 3d of June of the previous year. He was, probably, an early inhabitant of Sandwich, where, in 1643, there was a person of the same name of suitable age to be enrolled among those who were able to perform military duty, he being at that time the only individual in the Colony known to bear that name. Subsequently a Samuel Arnold, undoubtedly the same, was at Yarmouth, where he had a son Samuel born on the ninth day of May, in 1649. He continued with the Marshfield Church until his decease, which occurred on the 1st of September, 1693. He was succeeded in the ministry by Rev. Edward Tompson in 1696.

Mr. Arnold was present at the inquest on the dead body of John Phillips, Jr., being one of the jurymen; and, as this jury was very exact in reporting the precise time of the occurrence, which happened on the day on which the inquest was held, it is presumed that he had no doubt as to the time, although Captain Thomas gave the wrong month in his manuscript.

Captain Nathaniel Thomas, the author of the manuscript printed on pages 17—20, was probably

the grandson of Mr. William Thomas, a man of much distinction among the early settlers of Plymouth. The progenitor, and his son Nathaniel, came very early from Wales, and were among the first inhabitants of Marshfield, where they severally served the Colony and Town many years, in very important trusts, with great credit.

The elder Mr. Thomas was one of the "Purchasers or Old Comers," and was held in much esteem by the Colonists, who in 1642, and annually until his decease, chose him to the honorable and responsible office of Assistant. He died, according to the inscription on his grave-stone in Marshfield, in the month of August, 1651, being in "about the seventy eighth year of his age." His character is faithfully given by Mr. Secretary Morton, in the "New England's Memorial."

The son, Captain Nathaniel Thomas, Senior, died on the thirteenth of February, 1674-5, in the sixty eighth year of his age. His descendants have been numerous in Marshfield, Plymouth, and several other towns which formerly were comprised within the jurisdiction of the Old Colony of New Plymouth. He had an only son named Nathaniel

who in 1683, the same year in which Rev. Mr. Arnold's letter was written, was also styled Captain. This son was born about the year 1644; and, consequently, was only fourteen years old at the time of the decease of Phillips, in 1658, while his father was about fifty two. As both of these bore the same title,—as the father died in 1674-5, eight years before Mr. Arnold's letter was written,—and as the son was alive in 1658, although very young,—it is somewhat doubtful which of the two wrote the manuscript, which unfortunately neither signed nor dated.

The second Nathaniel Thomas died on the twenty second of October, 1718, at the age of seventy four years. He served in the famous war against Philip, the Chief of the Narraganset Indians, and performed many other important services for the Town and Colony.

Mr. Timothy Rogers, the eye-witness to the terrible event of June, 1666, was son of Mr. John Rogers of Duxbury, and grandson of the Thomas Rogers who came passenger in the May Flower in the memorable voyage of 1620. In 1681, although he had not attained the age of

sixty years, he was exonerated from bearing arms on account of lameness.

The town of Marshfield numbered among its inhabitants some of the most respectable families and useful individuals in the Colony. Among them, and not mentioned in these pages or only slightly alluded to, were those bearing the names of Winslow, Sprague, Bourne, Waterman, Bradford, Howland, Adams, Snow, Eames, Holmes, Weston, Dingley, Russell, Sherman, Williamson, Barker, Beesbeech, Bisbee, Beare, White, Ford, Truant, Chillingsworth, Carver, and Rouse. These are the names of the principal inhabitants previous to the year 1666. Some of them were in the town only a short time, and finally settled elsewhere; while others remained there for several generations.

In August, 1643, forty nine of the inhabitants of Marshfield were enrolled as being able to do military duty, they being between the ages of sixteen and sixty years.

On the earliest list of freemen, probably taken during, or about, the year 1644, there were only eleven names of persons who belonged to the

town of Marshfield. These were, in the orthography of the record, as follow:—

Mr Edward Winslow	Robte Waterman
Mr Wm Thomas	John Dingley
Josias Winslow	Thom Shillingsworth
Kanelme Winslow	John Russell
Mr Thomas Burne	Mr Nathaniell Thomas.
Mr Edw Buckley	

The number of "The names of such as have taken the Oath of Fidelity of the Toune of Marshfeild in the yeare 1657" was twenty seven.

A list, which appears to be of Freemen, without date, but evidently prepared in 1658, contains twenty six names.

The Freemen in 1664 were thirty two in number. Among them was William Shurtleff.

In May, 1670, there were twenty nine Freemen.

In March, 1683-4, the number amounted to sixty three, and contained many names not mentioned in these pages; such as, Foster, Crooker, Little, Dogget, Branch, Hewet, Sylvester, Walker, King, Macall, Wood, Read, Staniford, Childs, Baker, Sayer, Tayler, Rogers and Stevens.

The family of Mr. John Phillips.

Very little is known concerning this ill-fated family, which suffered so much by the singular calamities which happened, through the agency of lightning, to the town of Marshfield, in the years 1658 and 1666.

John Phillips, the stirps, is first mentioned in the Plymouth Colony Records, as early as the sixth of April, 1640, when he had "a garden place vpon Stony brooke in Duxborrow" laid out for him by order of the Court. On the fourth of June, of the same year, he had a grant of four acres in the same neighborhood; and, on the second of the following November, he had twenty acres "of those lands that lye Northward from Duxborrow mill towards Greens Harbour," "his houslott to be ꝑt thereof." In 1643, he was an inhabitant of Dux-

bury, as his name appears on the list with those of that town who were able to bear arms. On the seventh of June, 1659, he was propounded to take up his freedom; which he does not appear to have done, as his name is not on any list that has been preserved, nor is his admission recorded in the books of the Colony.

The name of his first wife is not known, nor the time of her decease.

His second wife, whom he married on the sixth of July, 1654, was Grace, the widow of Mr. William Holloway. She was represented as being very infirm in 1653, at the time of the decease of Mr. Holloway, and was therefore assisted in the settlement of his estate by Rev. Mr. Bulkeley, and, subsequently, by the elder Mr. Phillips. The last of whom became bound to pay certain amounts to her two children; which obligation he performed some time afterwards, one of the recipients being an unmarried daughter named Grace, as her mother, and the other, her sister.

Mrs. Grace Phillips was one of the victims to the stroke of lightning which occurred on the twenty third of June, 1666.

Soon after the death of this wife, Mr. Phillips, on the twenty third of February, 1666-7, made a contract of marriage with Mrs. Faith Dotey, the widow of the May Flower pilgrim, Edward, which was consummated by marriage on the fourteenth of the subsequent March. By this contract, which is recorded at considerable length on the 164th page of the fourth volume of Court Orders of the Plymouth Colony, it appears that both parties had several children. Those of Mr. Phillips are made known through his will and otherwise, and have been already mentioned. Her family consisted of several sons, Edward, Thomas, John, and possibly more, and daughters, Desire, Elizabeth and Mary.

Mrs. Faith Phillips died a short time previous to July, 1677, when her estate, which she had inherited from her first husband, was divided among her children. Her maiden name was Clarke, and her father, Thirston Clarke, (frequently called Tristram,) and his wife Faith, were early inhabitants of Plymouth. Many of her descendants are now living in New England, particularly at Plymouth, and in its neighborhood.

His children by his first wife were the following: John, perhaps his oldest, who was killed by lightning on the thirty first of July, 1658; Samuel; Jeremiah, killed in the same manner on the twenty third of June, 1666, at the same instant with his step-mother and Mr. William Shurtleff; and Mary.

By his second wife, Grace, he had Hannah and Grace, Joseph, and Benjamin.

By his third wife, Faith, he is supposed to have had no issue.

Of the sons, Samuel and Benjamin survived their parents. They were married and had issue. Mary, the only daughter which survived her father, was weak in intellect, and had, on that account, a special provision in his will.

Mr. John Phillips is supposed to have died in Marshfield, some time in the fall of 1691, perhaps in October of that year, having arrived to about the ninetieth year of his age.

A brief Notice of William Shurtleff, of Marshfield.

AMONG the adventurous few who came to New England, during the first fifteen years of the existence of the Colony of New Plymouth, was William Shurtleff; and so young was he when he was indentured as an apprentice, in 1634, that he was to serve eleven years, as is made apparent by the following entry, preserved on the seventieth page of the first volume of the Plymouth Court Orders:—

"September 2. 1634 } William Shetle hath put himselfe an apprentise to Thomas Clarke for the terme of eleuen yeares from the 16 of May last and at the end of the sayd terme the sayd Thomas is to cloth him with two sutes fit for such a seruant and also eyght Bushells of Indian Corne."

In olden times the word "servant" had a very different signification from its present acceptation. Then, it was generally applied to an apprentice, and to any person who was in the employ of others; or, in the words of an old lexicographer, "one who serves another." Now, it is used to denote an individual whose occupation is menial in its nature; or, according to modern authority, to "one in subjection, a menial," &c.

The Thomas Clarke, to whom young Shurtleff was apprenticed, was by trade a carpenter. He came to Plymouth in the Ann, in the summer of 1623, where he dwelt until his decease in 1697. His grave-stone, one of the oldest on Plymouth burying hill, marks his earthly resting-place. Without any apparent evidence, he has been confounded by many with the mate, or rather pilot, of the renowned May Flower. He was father of several children, among whom was the famous Nathaniel Clarke, the successor to Secretary Morton, and a Councillor under the notorious Andros; and Susanna, the first wife of the Hon. Barnabas Lothrop, of Barnstable, an Assistant to the Plymouth Colony previous to its

union with Massachusetts, and afterwards a member of the Council of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

The above is the earliest that can be found of Mr. Shurtleff, and nothing is known with certainty concerning his parentage, nor the time of his arrival in this country, nor of the causes or inducements which led him, at such a tender age, to leave his native land.

If it can be inferred from circumstances, he came from Yorkshire, in England; for in the West Riding of that County, and in a portion of it called Hallamshire, is situated the village of Ecclesfield, about five miles due north of the famous town of Sheffield, and about twenty from Scrooby, lately shown by Mr. Hunter to be the early gathering place of the Puritans before they left England for Holland. In this village, at a seat called Whitley-hall, once resided the only family, of which we have any knowledge, who bore the name previous to the appearance of William Shurtleff, or any other person of the name, in America. Therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose that he, living so near the nestling-place of the Leyden Pilgrims,

and being of an enthusiastic age, became fired by the spirit of adventure or inspired with the holy zeal of the Puritans; and thus became one of the first settlers of the town of Plymouth, and one of the forefathers of New England.

This name, like almost all others of ancient date, was variously spelled. First it appears as Chiercliffe, then Chyrecliffe, Shiercliffe, and afterwards Shirtleff. The vowels, *e*, *i*, *u*, and *y*, were very promiscuously used in both syllables, according to individual caprice or fashion. In New England, although the orthography is exceedingly various in old records, the name being scarcely spelt twice in the same manner, owing to writers spelling it according to the sound received by each, the first comer wrote it Shurtlef, as did also his children. What induced his grandson to double the final letter, and write his name Shurtleff, cannot now be ascertained, but must be attributed to the fashion of the time in which he lived. Be this as it may, the change has been considered so proper, that it has been almost universally adopted by the family, and continued in use to the present time.

In 1643 Mr. Shurtleff was certainly an inhabitant of Plymouth, where he was enrolled as being of the required age to perform military service for the Colony. Undoubtedly, he remained there during the whole term of his apprenticeship, which terminated in May, 1645. How much longer he dwelt in Plymouth has not been accurately ascertained, although it is known that he was an inhabitant of that town as late as September, 1659.

The same "Willm Shertcliffe for breaking the peace vpon John Smyth is fyned v^{s}" on the fifth of June, 1644; and on the second of October, 1650, the authorities "present James Cole of the towne of Plymouth for making of a batterie vppon Willam Shirtley of the aforesaid towne." Such items are not uncommon in the old records.

In 1646 his name appears in a list of names comprising the Townsmen of Plymouth.

At the General Court of the Colony, held at Plymouth on the third of June, 1656, he first appears in public life, being chosen one of "the Surveyors for the highwaies," for the town of Plymouth. In recording this event his name is written "Willam Shirtley."

"Willam Shirtley" is found serving as Juryman on the sixth of October, 1657, in a controversy between two residents of Plymouth.

On the seventh of June, 1659, "Willam Shurtley" was chosen Constable for Plymouth, and on the same day, as "Willam Shirtley," he was first on a list of names of "such as stand propounded to take vp their freedom."

The following entry is made in the Colonial Court Orders, under date of the first of May, 1660; probably it is the last during his connection with Plymouth, of which he was then Constable:—

"Willam Shurtlife } were admitted freemen
and John Caruer } att this Court."

He probably removed to Marshfield about this time, as his name cannot be found any later in any of the records of the Town of Plymouth. Nor can it be ascertained that he ever became a member of the Church at Plymouth, although it is known that he was a member of some Church according to statute requisition. Unfortunately the Church Records of Marshfield are not in a condition to show whether he was in church-fellowship in that town.

His name is not on any list of freemen which has been preserved among the Plymouth Colonial Records, owing to the fact that none of them were taken during the time which elapsed between his admission and death. Nevertheless, on a list of the freemen of the town of Marshfield, taken for town purposes in 1664, and preserved in the records of that town, his name occurs with thirty one others.

While in Plymouth his estate was at Strawberry hill near the Reed Pond, and not far from the present bounds of Kingston.

In Marshfield he resided in the eastern part of the town, in the neighborhood of what is now called White's Ferry, near the mouth of North River. He was in possession of this estate at the time of his decease, having bought it a short time previous of Mr. Thomas Tilden. The deed, which was dated on the sixth of July, 1670, four years after his decease, states that thirty three pounds sterling had been formerly paid for the same by "William Shirtleiffe," of Marshfield, then deceased. The "house and lands" had formerly belonged to Mr. Robert Waterman, and had been bought by

him of the administrator on the estate of Mr. Thomas Howell, deceased.

Besides his land at Strawberry hill and Marshfield, he had several grants from the Court of Assistants. On the third of June, 1662, he and twenty three others had an allotment of land in the following words:—"It was further graunted by this court that the abouesaid servants and ancient freemen shall haue libertie in case they can not procure Saconett necke" [now Little Compton] "according to the graunt To looke out some other place vndisposed of for theire accomodation."

At the Court held on the fifth of June, 1666, less than three weeks before his decease, he had another grant of land in the following words:—"The court haue graunted that Willam Shirtliffe shalbee accomodated with land amongst the servants neare vnto the Bay line."

He also had land at "Punckateesett," now called Tiverton; and after his decease his heirs received in his right a conveyance of land at Saconet from the Indians.

From an instrument recorded with the Old Colony deeds it is ascertained that he sold meadow

land in Plymouth to Gabriel Fallowell on the twenty seventh of March, 1660, at which time he was called of Marshfield. Perhaps he was then preparing to change his place of residence, or had actually done so since the fifteenth of the previous September, when he certainly was a townsman and office-holder in Plymouth.

His dwelling-house in Marshfield was destroyed by fire early in the year 1666, and on this account he was sojourning at the house of his near neighbor, Mr. John Phillips, at the time of the occurrence of the lightning which caused his death.

From the several accounts of his death that have been preserved, together with facts which have been transmitted from generation to generation in the family, and other data obtained from authentic sources, the following particulars regarding this event have been deduced.

While he was partaking of the hospitality of Mr. Phillips, it appears that one of those dreadful droughts occurred, which were so very distressing to our early planters, and threatened to destroy all the fruits of their spring labor. On account of this the good people of several neighboring

congregations observed a day of fasting and prayer, as they were wont to do, in those days, when suffering under afflictive dispensations.

Soon after this, on the twenty third of June, 1666, happened the terrific thunder-storm which is so graphically described in the letter of Rev. Mr. Arnold. At the time of this storm there were fourteen persons in the common sitting-room of the house of Mr. Phillips. Perhaps they were the following: — Mr. John Phillips and his wife Grace; Jeremiah Phillips, a young man of about twenty years of age, son of Mr. Phillips; four other young children of Mr. Phillips; Grace and Hannah Holloway, the two children of Mrs. Phillips by her former husband; Mr. William Shurtleff and his wife Elizabeth, and their sons William and Thomas; and, finally, Mr. Timothy Rogers, the individual who related the circumstances to Mr. Arnold, the writer of the letter which has been the means of preserving many of the particulars of this sad event. These persons were mostly seated around the room. 'Mr. Shurtleff was sitting beside his wife, holding her hand in his, and having one of their children in his arms, the other being

between him and a table under which was a dog. The storm of rain coming on with great violence, Mrs. Phillips requested to have the door closed. Whereupon a stroke of lightning passed down the chimney, which it rent to pieces, smote down most of the persons, if not all, instantly killing Mr. Shurtleff, Mrs. Phillips and Jeremiah Phillips, and then passed out through the door, splitting it into fragments. This occurred on Saturday; and they were buried on the following day, being the twenty fourth, according to an entry made in the Marshfield town records.

It is shown in the Plymouth Colony Records that "Willam Shirtley married vnto Elizabeth Lettice the 18th of October 1655." She was a daughter of Thomas and Anne Lettice of Plymouth, who were in New England as early as 1638, if not in 1635. They had three sons, William, Thomas and Abiel.

William, the oldest son and "heir apparent," as he is styled in a recorded document, was born at Plymouth in 1657. He married Susanna, daughter of Hon. Barnabas Lothrop of Barnstable, in October, 1683, and died on the fourth of Feb-

ruary, 1729-30, in the seventy second year of his age. He was a Selectman of Plymouth for some years, Captain of the train-band, a Delegate to the Provincial Assembly in 1694, and Town Treasurer from 1695 to 1704, inclusive. When the town of Plympton was set off from Plymouth and incorporated he became an inhabitant of the new town; and at the first election for town officers, which took place on the first day of March, 1707-8, he was chosen Clerk. This office he held three years, and the earliest records of that town, written by him, are now preserved and are in excellent order. His wife, a grandaughter of Rev. John Lothrop and of the Thomas Clarke already mentioned, bare him eight sons and five daughters, among whom was Rev. William Shurtleff late of Newcastle and Portsmouth, N. H. She died at Plympton on the ninth of August, 1726, in the sixty third year of her age, having been born at Barnstable on the twenty eighth of February, 1664-5.

Thomas, the second son, is supposed to have been the person who married Sarah Kimball at Plympton on the twenty first of May, 1713. No evidence of the time of his decease or of his hav-

ing had any issue has been found, although very diligent search has been made.

Abiel, the third and youngest son, was born at Marshfield in June, 1666, a very short time after the decease of his father. At his birth there was a considerable debate about his name. By some it was thought that he should be called after Boanerges, (Children of Thunder,) as mentioned in the New Testament; but the difficulty of converting the plural name to the singular number fortunately prevailed against the infliction of an appellation which was far from being euphonious. The scriptural name Abiel, which, interpreted into English from the Hebrew, signifies "God my father," being sufficiently indicative of his posthumous birth, was adopted as the most satisfactory. He dwelt in Plymouth, where he married, on the fourteenth of January, 1695-6, Lydia Barnes, daughter of Jonathan and Elizabeth, and was the father of seven sons and three daughters. He was a Selectman of Plymouth, and held other offices in that town. Like his brothers, William and Thomas, he spent the last years of his life in Plympton. There he died on the twenty eighth of October, 1732, in

the sixty seventh year of his age. Lydia, his wife, died on the tenth of September, 1727, in the fifty third year of her age, she having been born at Plymouth on the fourth of July, 1674.

A few years after the death of the first William Shurtleff, Elizabeth, his widow, married on the eighteenth of November, 1669, Mr. Jacob Cooke, son of the Mr. Francis Cooke who came in the May Flower, and of his wife Esther, or Hester as the name is usually written. Mr. Jacob Cooke was a widower at the time of his marriage with Mrs. Shurtleff, his first wife having been Damaris, a daughter of Mr. Stephen Hopkins, also a passenger of the May Flower. Mr. Jacob Cooke died in 1676; and on the first day of January, 1688-9, his widow married, for her third husband, Mr. Hugh Cole, of Swansey, formerly of Plymouth, she being his second wife, his first having been Mary Foxwell. Mrs Cole died a few years afterwards, and Mr. Cole married a third wife.

The descendants of Mr. Shurtleff lived during the first three generations mostly in what now comprises Plymouth County, chiefly in Plymouth and the part of Plympton which now forms Carver.

A little more than a century ago, one parish of the town of Plympton contained more legal voters of the name of Shurtleff than can now be found within the limits of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and, perhaps, in the United States.

Branches of the family can be found permanently settled in various parts of Massachusetts, and in a few other States of the Union.

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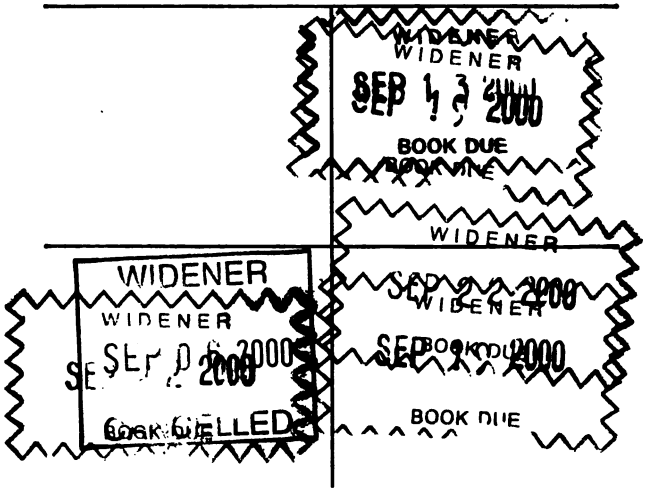

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